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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S COURTESY CALL ON NEW MINISTER OF POLICE AFFAIRS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Lisa Piascik for reasons 1.4 (b & d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The Ambassador met with newly appointed Minister of Police Affairs Dr. Ibrahim Yakubu Lame on February 10. Dr. Lame presented the Nigerian Government's (GON) efforts to reform the police in order to improve Nigerian internal security as part of President Yar'Adua's Seven Point Agenda. The Ambassador suggested that the U.S. Mission could assist the GON through our various existing programs. The Minister (U.S. educated at Ohio University) agreed to coordinate further, including providing a representative from the NPF for the Framework for Partnership Working Groups on law enforcement between the Mission and Nigerian Law Enforcement to discuss areas of common concern particularly on our progress on forensic investigation. The Ambassador emphasized the need for improved cooperation on the part of the GON if USG assistance is to be fruitful. END SUMMARY.

Police Reform Agenda

¶2. (SBU) On February 10, 2009, the Ambassador made a courtesy call to the Ministry of Police Affairs (MPA) in Abuja. USG participants included the Ambassador, INLOff and RSO (notetaker). MPA participants included Dr. Lame, Minister of Police Affairs, Mr. Ben Ibe, Director of Police Affairs and Dr. Kassim Gidabo, Special Assistant. Minister Lame received his Ph.D from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio in 1980.

¶3. (SBU) Dr. Lame indicated that the Yar'Adua administration had convened a Committee on Police Reform. A comprehensive report was produced but had not yet been issued. He indicated the report would make recommendations in four to five areas. First, the need to build the capacity of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Lame envisioned extending the training period for recruits from six months to a year with the Defense Academy's program to strengthen officer training.

¶4. (SBU) Lame indicated that police officers' salaries and benefits, including housing allowances and pensions, needed to be increased. He noted that NPF is in arrears in assuring monthly payment of pensions (accumulated total arrears of 37 billion Naira or USD 250 million) and of salaries (accumulated total arrears of 12 billion Naira or USD 81 million). He added that his Ministry was collaborating with some Nigerian states, local governments and businesses to improve logistics, transportation and allowances for officers.

¶5. (SBU) The third area was to improve the public image of the NPF and the self-confidence and pride of police officers, which he admitted were very low.

¶6. (SBU) The fourth area was to improve the NPF's capacity to prevent crimes and intercommunal violence by gathering intelligence and developing sources. He also indicated that evidence collection and forensic analysis are currently weak.

There are currently only two forensics labs and that he intended on establishing others. He stated that his focus will be on increasing resources first, then eventually expected forensic labs in all six regional zones.

¶7. (SBU) Dr. Lame noted that all of these reforms will require massive resources. (Note: the 381,000 Police staff is three times the size of that of the Army and two times the size of the Civil Service. End Note). He pointed out that Nigeria was not close to the UN's recommended ratio of one police officer for each 400 civilians. He estimated that the recommendations of the &white paper8 would cost 3 trillion Naira or USD 20 billion and estimated the current annual police budget to be 20 billion Naira or USD 135 million for capital expenses, and a total operating budget of 200 billion Naira or USD 1.35 billion.

Seven Pilot Cities Crime Prevention and Control Strategy

¶8. (SBU) In line with the priorities of the Nigerian Federal Government, Dr. Lame indicated that seven pilot cities namely FCT-Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Onitsha, Kano and Maiduguri have been identified for special crime prevention and control strategy. The strategy plan is to reduce the incidence of crime by at least 50% within one year by focusing additional resources to ensure the delivery of efficient and effective police services in these pilot areas. The items requested include vehicles, arms and ammunition, sea boats and equipment, dogs and horses, explosive ordinance disposal equipment, surveillance equipment, communication network. New units such as anti-terrorist units, rapid deployment units and community policing units will be

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deployed . A criminal database and internet access at all police stations in the pilot areas would also be developed. Dr. Lame also indicated that the efforts to reduce crime will include the use of community policing methods and public private partnerships with businesses and informal policing units consisting of citizens. The total cost is approximately 5 billion Naira or USD 34 million. If the pilot is successful, then the strategy will gradually be deployed nationwide.

US Assistance to the Nigerian Police Force

¶9. (SBU) The Ambassador underscored that the U.S. is ready to support the Nigerian Police Force through the Mission's various programs to include: recent US AID TIP workshops; the Mission's Law Enforcement Working Groups; training opportunities at the International Law Enforcement Academies in Botswana and Roswell; and the Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance programs. The Ambassador informed Dr. Lame that our past efforts to build institutional capacity had not always been fruitful as the GON did not always respond to training offers in a timely manner which had resulted in training funds being redirected to other countries and projects. The Ambassador requested a point of contact be established to improve the cooperation between the U.S. Mission and the MPA and received a commitment from the Minister to send his representative to the Framework for Partnership Working Groups and to respond with information concerning Human Rights issues.

10.(C)Comment: The new Minister is a US educated academic who appears properly armed with the requisite educational background to tackle fundamental problems relating to NPF finances and efforts to train and develop competent personnel. He served briefly as a Senator in 1992 and was the People's Democratic Party's pioneer Deputy National Secretary before serving as the Senior Special Assistant to former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. Because he does not have any professional experience with the NPF, he faces a monumental task as there will be significant resistance to institutional change in the notoriously corrupt police and he will likely have difficulties receiving needed funding for his initiatives. However, if he succeeds in reforming the

police, internal security would be significantly improved in Nigeria.

(U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos
SANDERS